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SUBJECT: DARFUR SECURITY UPDATE

REF: REFTEL:

Classified By: P/E CHIEF E. WHITAKER, REASON SECTION 1.4 (b) AND (d)

11. (U) Summary: The fractured relationship between the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories continues to blur and shift with reports of fracturing, changing alliances and continued NRF attacks against Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) targets of opportunity. The Government offensive switches direction to disrupt a growing threat to South Darfur. Tensions continue to rise in the Fur-dominated IDP camps in South Darfur. End summary.

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Rumors of Changing Alliances Rampant in Darfur  
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12. (C) DPA non-signatory commanders are spreading conflicting rumors of competing commanders signing the DPA, joining the Government or SLM/A Minawi, and forming new National Redemption Front (NRF) elements in the Jebel Marra. In a matter of days, our Senior Security Advisor was told contradictory information by normally reliable sources, indicating an uncertain climate for the non-signatories and a volatile security environment. General Terada, deputy senior commander in the SLM/A-Wahid camp, has reportedly joined forces with G-19 leader Osman Bushara, who has moved forces south into the foothills of Jebel Marra and formed a new NRF element. Hussein Al Nabi, brother of Jar Al Nabi, and Youssef Garang have also reportedly moved some forces to Jebel Marra. Adam Bekheit claims there are no new NRF forces. General Garuda, senior commander for SLM/A-W, claims that Abu Basit, Abu Ghasim Iman, and several other commanders have joined the Government and are leading the fighting in east Jebel Marra. Minni Minawi reports that seven commanders have joined him from the Abdul Shafi faction of the SLM. A Minawi delegation met with NRF/G-19 commanders in Umm Mahraih from Sept 10-12 with reportedly a positive outcome, but no promises. The majority of JEM forces have withdrawn to the west, but other elements of the NRF continue to attack SAF targets of opportunity.

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Gov't Offensive Continues; Emphasis Shifts Towards Jebel Marra  
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13. (C) Government forces continued their offensive with widespread bombing on the periphery of Jebel Marra on September 9. SAF bombed the villages of Tabarat, Marif, Mariti, Katur, Sadingo, Safablah, and Turba, all of which are areas under nominal control by General Terada's forces. Over 20 SAF vehicles and troops followed up with a ground attack on Tabarat on Sept 10. Bombing targeted on Tabarat, Sabun, and Saby continued on Sept. 12 with reported massing of SAF forces in Menawashi and Tawila. Senior Security Advisor witnessed a small battalion-sized element moving

towards the southwest from El Fasher on the morning of Sept. 12. Some of these were in the same vehicles returning from the north that were witnessed on Sept 6. Two additional attack helicopters were observed at El Fasher airfield on Sept. 12, bringing the total to five. UN analysis concludes that SAF forces are massing for a five prong attack on the area from Tawila, Shangil Tobiya, Kabkabiya, Menawashi, and Nertiti. SAF may be initiating the attacks into General Terada,s stronghold to counter the reported new NRF alliance before it can organize and threaten South Darfur.

14. (C) Comment: A clearer picture of the nature of the SAF offensive is emerging. Even with the significant build-up of forces, the SAF does not have the manpower or the logistic capacity to sustain a major offensive. Continued fighting will be localized and based on SAF,s ability to mass forces on prioritized threats. These offensives will likely be followed with a lull of one to two weeks in the area taken by SAF. This allows the SAF to pull forces back to garrison towns to refit, facilitate logistics and position forces for the next offensive. This keeps significant forces in garrison towns to defer rebel attacks, but weakens the positions that they have recently taken, such as Umm Sidr. The SAF reportedly left less than a battalion in the vicinity of Umm Sidr, which was easily scattered by an NRF attack on Sept. 11. The effort to reinforce SAF elements at Umm Sidr with Antonov air support was predictably ineffective against a mobile NRF force. There is no reporting on the effectiveness of the attack helicopters used by SAF to cover its withdrawal. End comment.

15. (C) Meanwhile, UN and international NGOs reported a continued buildup of SAF forces in South Darfur. In the northern areas, SAF has reinforced its garrisons in Nyala,

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Kass, and Menawashi. These forces could be quickly mobilized to support operations in the outskirts of Jebel Marra. However, successfully attacking the interior of Jebel Marra would require considerably more forces than are currently available in South Darfur. In the east, there are reports of SAF reinforcement in the garrison of Ed Daein. West Darfur reinforcements include reports of another battalion in the vicinity of Jebel Moon and increased SAF forces in Nertiti. SAF forces in Nertiti are unlikely to traverse Jebal Marra, but could be used to threaten SLM/A-W forces in the west and keep them from reinforcing General Terada,s positions.

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Tensions Rising in Fur-Dominated IDP Camps  
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16. (C) Reports from Nyala indicate that the Government is concerned about the increasingly active and more vocal Fur population in the South Darfur IDP camps. Lack of Government response to Arab and Janjaweed harassment has raised tensions in several camps, but particularly Kalma camp, where 90,000 IDPs are less than 12 kms from Nyala. The SAF has reinforced its checkpoint between Kalma camp and Nyala with an additional platoon. According to the UNOCHA South Darfur regional director, Fur leaders and SLM/A-W representatives in the camps are actively agitating, and appear to be refocusing their rhetoric away from their disappointment with the DPA and towards advocating for Fur rights and justice. Youths are becoming more radicalized and less under the control of traditional sheiks. The Government is actively attempting to suppress political opposition. The increased tension will keep a number of SAF forces near these camps and reduce the number of forces for offensive operations.

17. (C) Comment. While there is little likelihood that there will be a major offensive across the breadth of North Darfur, it is evident that the Government will continue to conduct offensive operations against perceived threats from the NRF and SLM/A-W forces. Unless the Government brings significantly more forces into Darfur, the SAF is incapable

of providing sufficient force to protect garrison towns and sustain forces on the front lines that can maintain tactical superiority or impose security. Thus, this will likely result in a continued series of attacks and counterattacks. Adam Bekheit,s attack on UMM Sidr is a classic example of rebel forces picking their targets of opportunity to capture key munitions and supplies, yet declining engagement in conventional combat against superior forces. To date, the Government attacks have been in the sparsely settled north and south of Tawila, where earlier fighting forced much of the population from the area this past July. However, fighting will likely spread to more populated areas, and there is growing potential for discontent in the IDP camps to boil over. End comment.  
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